# Chapter 4 Conservation Element Goals, Objectives and Policies

Unified Sumter County/Center Hill/Webster Comprehensive Plan

#### Chapter 4 – Conservation Element Goals, Objectives and Policies

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#### Universal Goals, Objectives and Policies

#### **Goal 4 Conservation**

Conserve, protect and appropriately use the natural resources so as to maintain the integrity of the natural systems and ensure that resources are used efficiently yet maintaining the highest environmental quality possible.

#### **Objective 4.1** Air Quality

Through October 2035, the County and Cities shall continue to meet or exceed applicable state and federal air quality standards.

#### Policy 4.1.1 Support State and Federal Air Quality Standards

The County and Cities shall continue to support state and federal guidelines to improve and protect air quality to ensure that the county and cities meet or exceed all applicable air quality standards

#### Policy 4.1.2 Impact of Air Quality Standards on Industrial Development

The County and Cities recognize air pollution potential as a significant factor in evaluating industry being attracted to the county and cities. Compliance with air quality standards shall be addressed through the required permitting process by the applicable state or federal agency.

#### **Objective 4.2 Flood Hazard Areas**

Through October 2035, all development occurring within the 100-year flood hazard area, as determined by the effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall provide for appropriate mitigation and loss avoidance.

#### Policy 4.2.1 Protection of Flood Storage and Conveyance Functions

The County and Cities shall retain in its land development regulations requirements to control loss of life and property in flood hazard areas. The County and Cities shall protect flood storage and conveyance functions of the 100-year floodplain and flood storage areas by limiting development and fill activities consistent with the policies and standards in the Future Land Use Element.

#### Policy 4.2.2 Acquisition of Flood Prone Properties

The County and Cities shall continue to pursue programs and opportunities which allow acquisition of flood prone properties for use as open space, conservation or flood retention.

#### Policy 4.2.3 Filling of 100-year Floodplain

The County and Cities shall discourage filling activity within the 100-year floodplain through appropriate standards in its land development regulations.

#### Policy 4.2.4 Densities within the 100-year Floodplain

The County and Cities shall retain in its land development regulations provisions to control allowable densities in the 100-year floodplain. No development shall be approved for parcels in

the 100-year floodplain, unless the development complies with the density and siting policies for floodplain areas in the Future Land Use Element.

#### Policy 4.2.5 National Flood Insurance Program

The County and Cities shall enforce at least the minimum land management flood prevention criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program.

#### **Objective 4.3 Surface Water.**

Through October 2035, the County and Cities shall continue to maintain land development regulations to protect the water quality of lakes, streams and rivers within the county and cities.

#### Policy 4.3.1 Stormwater Run-Off and Detention/Retention

The County and Cities shall maintain standards in its land development regulations to minimize negative effects of development on surface water quality. Standards shall include at a minimum, requirements for:

- a. Vegetated setbacks from major water bodies to minimize the adverse affects of runoff;
- b. Standards encouraging clustering away from surface water bodies; and
- c. Best management practices consistent with state and federal recommended standards, to reduce pesticide and fertilizer run-off and soil erosion.

**Policy 4.3.2** Consistency with SWFWMD and Applicable State Stormwater Requirements It is the express intent of the County and Cities for the requirements and standards for the onsite management of stormwater run-off to be fully consistent with the requirements and standards of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and other applicable state stormwater standards and shall not impose additional standards beyond those of SWFWMD or other applicable state stormwater standards.

#### Policy 4.3.3 Watersheds

The County and Cities shall continue to coordinate with the appropriate federal and state agencies to identify and address significant and adverse impacts of development within the watersheds of the county. In addition, specific attention shall be given to the Withlacoochee River, Lake Panasoffkee, South County Canal System, and Jumper Creek watersheds.

#### Objective 4.4 Wetlands

Through October 2035, the County and Cities shall maintain land use regulations that conserves, appropriately uses, and protects wetland functions.

#### Policy 4.4.1 Wetlands Classification

The County and Cities shall classify wetlands into the following categories:

a. Category I wetlands refers to any wetland located in the area designated Conservation on the Future Land Use Map;

- b. Category II wetlands are those wetland areas, which are not Category I and which meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - 1. Any wetland that has a direct hydrological connection to a natural surface water body greater than 500 acres in size or to the Floridan Aquifer; or
  - 2. Any isolated wetland 100 acres or larger in size; or
  - 3. Any wetland of any size that contains nesting federal and/or state listed wildlife species.
- c. Category III wetlands are those isolated wetland areas which are less than 100 acres in size and do not otherwise qualify as a Category I or II wetland; and
- d. Category IV wetlands are those isolated wetlands less than 0.5 acres in size or otherwise exempt from SWFWMD or Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) regulation, and do not otherwise qualify as a Category I or II wetland.

# Policy 4.4.2 Removal, Alteration or Encroachment within Category I Wetlands Removal or encroachment within Category I wetlands shall not be permitted. Alteration to Category I wetlands shall be permitted only for purposes of correcting past damage, improving the quality of a wetland, enhancing an important wetland function, or fulfilling the requirements of a required management plan or permit.

#### Policy 4.4.3 Removal, Alteration, or Encroachment within Category II Wetlands

Removal, alteration and encroachment within Category II wetlands shall require an avoidance and minimization analysis to document that the applicant reviewed alternatives to the wetland encroachment and they were deemed to not be feasible. The continuing viability of Category II wetlands shall be the prime objective of the basis for review of all proposed alterations, modifications, or removal of these areas. The analysis and mitigation for any impacts to Category II wetlands shall be required pursuant to the requirements of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), SWFWMD or FDEP, according to which agency has jurisdiction over the specific wetland. Removal, alteration, or encroachment into a Category II wetland shall be consistent with the following:

- a. Such activity complies with requirements of all federal, state, and regional agencies claiming jurisdiction over wetland alteration; and
- b. The following activities are permitted in wetland areas provided they are consistent with a permit obtained from the applicable federal, state, or regional agency with jurisdiction over the wetland: construction of boardwalks/catwalks for direct access to water bodies; construction of wildlife management shelters; footbridges; observation decks and similar structures not requiring dredging

and/or filling for their placement; and clearing and/or construction of walking trails.

**Policy 4.4.4** Removal, Alteration, or Encroachment within Category III Wetlands
Removal, encroachment and alteration of Category III wetlands are presumed to be allowed pursuant to any requirement of ACOE, SWFWMD, or FDEP and:

- a. Such activity complies with requirements of all federal, state, and regional agencies claiming jurisdiction over the wetland; and
- b. The following activities are permitted in wetland setback areas provided they are consistent with a permit obtained from the applicable federal, state, or regional agency with jurisdiction over the wetland: construction of boardwalks/catwalks for direct access to water bodies; construction of wildlife management shelters; footbridges; observation decks and similar structures not requiring dredging and/or filling for their placement; and clearing and/or construction of walking trails.

**Policy 4.4.5** Removal, Alteration, or Encroachment within Category IV Wetlands
Removal, encroachment and alteration are allowed in Category IV wetlands. However, this
allowance does not absolve any other permitting requirement by that may be required by any
other federal, state, or regional agency.

**Policy 4.4.6 Identification and Classification of Wetlands for Development Orders**All wetlands on any proposed development site must be identified and classified as part of the application for and prior to the issuance of development orders which permit site alteration. Wetland areas shall be delineated and classified in accordance with Section 373.421, Florida Statutes. The identification and classification of wetlands shall be coordinated with the ACOE, SWFWMD, and FDEP.

#### Policy 4.4.7 Development of Single-Family Dwelling Unit within Wetland Area

Any lot containing a wetland area, regardless of its size or extent, may be developed with one single-family dwelling unit providing necessary permits are obtained from the applicable federal, state, or regional agency with jurisdiction over the wetland area. Any parcel created by subdivision, either exempt or non-exempt as defined by the land development regulations, after the adoption date of this Comprehensive Plan must provide adequate uplands to accommodate reasonable use and may not make use of this policy to develop in wetlands.

**Policy 4.4.8** Consistency with Federal and State Wetland Requirements and Standards It is the express intent of the County and Cities for the requirements and standards for the protection of wetlands to be fully consistent with the requirements and standards of the ACOE, SWFWMD, FDEP and other applicable federal or state wetland standards and shall not impose additional standards beyond those of all applicable federal and state wetland requirements and standards.

#### **Objective 4.5 Groundwater**

Through October 2035, maintain the quality and quantity of groundwater resources by protecting potable water resources including aquifer recharge areas.

#### Policy 4.5.1 Groundwater Protection and Aquifer Recharge Study Coordination

The County and Cities shall coordinate with other local governments, the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA), and SWFWMD to plan the reasonable use and management of regional water resources. Topics may include:

- a. Alternative water supply sources;
- b. Potential well field areas;
- c. Opportunities to increase utility efficiency;
- d. Areas of high development potential, where obtaining baseline data will be useful in monitoring; and
- e. Water conservation strategies.

#### Policy 4.5.2 Community Water Supply Wellhead Protection Zone

To protect public potable water supplies from possible contamination, the County and Cities shall maintain wellhead protection zone regulations within their land development regulations for well fields of existing and proposed public potable water systems. The focus of the wellhead protection within the land development regulations shall be to discourage and prohibit incompatible land uses around wellheads consistent with state law.

#### Objective 4.6 Water Conservation

Through October 2035, water conservation shall be promoted to maintain adopted level of services for potable water and to reduce the per capita reliance on groundwater for potable use.

#### Policy 4.6.1 Continued Implementation of Water Conservation Requirements

The County and Cities shall continue to require conservation of the water resources of the county and cities. The County and Cities will not issue any development permits which are inconsistent with the water conservation provisions of this comprehensive plan.

#### Policy 4.6.2 Cooperate with the Regional Observation and Monitor Well Program

The County and Cities shall cooperate with the SWFWMD to locate and implement additional regional observation and monitor wells in the county and cities so as to provide a grid of monitoring wells covering the whole county.

#### **Policy 4.6.3** Emergency Water Conservation Programs

The County and Cities shall adopt and implement emergency water conservation programs in accordance with the policies and requirements of SWFWMD.

#### Policy 4.6.4 Water Conservation Approaches

To conserve potable ground water sources and to accomplish reasonable reductions in potable water consumption, the County and Cities shall:

- Implement or require, where feasible, water reuse or reclamation systems for commercial or industrial operations which utilize large quantities of non-potable water;
- Consistent with the Florida Building Code, require the installation of water conservation devices in all new construction including, but not limited to, lowvolume flush toilets and urinals, low-flow faucets and spouts, state mandated rain sensors for irrigation systems;
- c. Encourage the use of Florida Friendly landscape designs and a mix of appropriate rain-maintained low maintenance native and non-native plants;
- d. Adhere to the residential per capita potable water level of service standard of 150 gallons/per day as required by SWFWMD; and
- e. Maintain consistency and coordination with SWFWMD Regional Water Supply Plan and the WRWSA Regional Water Supply Plan.

#### **Objective 4.7 Soil Erosion**

Soil erosion resulting from development activities shall be reduced by incorporating use of best management practices (BMP).

#### Policy 4.7.1 Soil Erosion and BMPs

The County and Cities shall not issue any development orders that do not incorporate best management practices (BMP) for the control of soil erosion or BMPs to control fugitive dust for development activities with the potential to generate excessive dust or erosion.

**Objective 4.8** Native Vegetated Communities and Endangered and Threatened Species Protection The County and Cities shall continue to manage development activities to avoid adverse impacts to the viability of native vegetated communities and the survival of endangered and threatened wildlife species.

#### Policy 4.8.1 Protection of Areas of Native Vegetative Communities

The County and Cities shall retain in its land development regulations requirements to conserve native vegetative communities. No development order will be issued which results in the destruction of unique or extensive areas of native vegetative communities without attempts to determine alternatives or suitable mitigation, including, but not limited to:

a. Maintain one unit per ten acres residential density in identified areas of native vegetative communities; or

- b. Utilization of the buffer and cluster requirements contained in the Future Land Use Element; or
- c. Adhere to the percentages of open space required of the Future Land Use Element.

#### Policy 4.8.2 Coordination to Protect Shared Unique Native Vegetative Communities

The County and Cities shall cooperate with adjacent local governments to protect shared unique native vegetative communities. The County and Cities shall participate in the cooperation by identifying shared unique native vegetative communities and commenting on development proposals that would potentially impact said unique vegetative communities.

### Policy 4.8.3 Land Development Regulations to Conserve Endangered and Threatened Wildlife

The County and Cities shall retain in its land development regulations the restriction of activities known to adversely affect the survival of endangered and threatened wildlife. The following methods will be used to regulate development:

- Utilize master planned development, cluster development and other flexible regulatory techniques to work with private developers in conserving habitat and species; and
- The presence of endangered and threatened species shall be indicated on applications for Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and other major development projects.

#### Policy 4.8.4 Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Lands

Map 4-1 identified environmentally sensitive lands to be protected. These environmentally sensitive lands include existing conservation lands and the watersheds of endangered or rare fish species. These environmentally sensitive lands and other areas of environmental concern not covered by other policies of this element shall be protected by the County and Cities according to the following guidelines:

- Development within these areas shall be regulated to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts to the existing native vegetative communities and water resources as follows:
  - 1. Residential development shall be permitted at a density of one unit per ten acres and encouraged to cluster in accordance with the provisions of the Future Land Use element;
  - 2. All clustered development must occur in an area with the least negative impact on environmentally sensitive resources, avoiding the 100-year floodplain when possible and must be developed in strict accordance with a site plan approved by the County or Cities after careful review to

assure protection of native vegetative communities from adverse impacts; and

b. Existing lots of record that are vested pursuant to the Future Land Use Element that do not meet the density requirements in a. above shall be exempt from this density restriction.

#### Objective 4.9 Publicly Managed Lands and Natural Reservations

Through October 2035, public conservation lands shall be protected from the adverse impacts of urbanization, and these conservation lands will be protected for appropriate public recreational use.

#### Policy 4.9.1 Coordination with Federal and State Agencies

The County and Cities shall coordinate with state and federal agencies to assure coordination of land use efforts and protection of valuable public natural resources through the following efforts:

- Recreation: Coordinate to maintain a network of resource based recreational opportunities that provide a variety of recreational opportunities that enhance local ecotourism efforts; and
- b. Adjacent Land Uses: Notify federal, state, and regional agencies to afford each the opportunity to comment on proposed land uses on adjacent properties requiring local governing board action. The purpose is to assure the opportunity to testify regarding the compatibility of the proposed use with the functions of the public lands.

## Policy 4.9.2 Subdivisions Adjacent to Publicly Managed Lands and Natural Reservation Areas

The County and Cities shall maintain in its land development regulations a requirement that all subdivision of land of more than four lots, created after the adoption of this comprehensive plan, must cluster these parcels on suitable upland away from any publicly managed lands or natural reservation area. A minimum 100 foot buffer shall be provided plus an additional buffer up to 100 feet may be required by the local governing board to assure compatibility between the development and publicly managed lands or natural reservations. Buffers may be incorporated into the required open space for the subdivision.

#### Objective 4.10 Hazardous Waste

The County and Cities shall maintain programs to facilitate and encourage proper disposal of hazardous waste.

#### Policy 4.10.1 Promote Proper Disposal of Hazardous Waste

The County and Cities shall promote proper disposal of hazardous waste through collection of miscellaneous hazardous wastes from individuals. Also, the County and Cities, in coordination with FDEP, shall inform and educate the public on the definition of hazardous wastes and types

of hazardous waste management practices through the use of posters, websites, and other educational programs

#### Policy 4.10.2 Amnesty Day Program

The County shall continue to participate in a bi-annual Amnesty Day program in which it collects miscellaneous hazardous wastes from residents residing in the unincorporated areas and cities.

#### **Unincorporated Area Specific Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### Goal 4U Conservation

Conserve, protect and properly manage the natural resources so as to maintain the integrity of the natural systems and ensure that resources are used efficiently yet maintaining the highest environmental quality possible.

#### **Objective 4.1U Mining**

Mining impacts shall be minimized through the application of appropriate standards for the extraction of minerals within the unincorporated area of the county.

#### Policy 4.1.1U Areas and Standards for Mining Activity

The County shall identify areas suitable for extraction of minerals within the unincorporated area of the county and maintain specific standards within its land development regulations to supplement the general standards contained herein.

#### Policy 4.1.2U Requirements for Mining Compatibility

The County shall assure compatibility of mining uses with adjacent land uses and protection of natural resources through the following requirements, which are further implemented within the land development regulations:

- Regulate mining activities to control buffer areas, maintenance of the mining area, groundwater withdrawals, unpermitted deposition of materials, soil stabilization, disturbance of wetlands, noise, vibration, air quality, security and reclamation of mined lands;
- b. All mining lands permitted pursuant to these policies must be adjacent to existing legally permitted or vested mine sites.
- c. Enforcement of mining regulations shall be funded through operating permit fees levied against mining operators.

#### Policy 4.1.3U Mining Impact on Groundwater

The County shall enforce its mining regulations within the land development regulations with the objective of restricting mining water withdrawals to avoid significant localized reductions in the water table and to require the re-use of water in accordance with SWFWMD best management practices for re-use in mining operations.

#### Policy 4.1.4U Approval Process for Mining Activity

In order to ensure that mine operators are able to secure long term rights to mine available deposits without over allocation of mining lands, the County shall provide for a two-phase approval process for mining operations. The County shall require, through the zoning process, that proposed mining activities submit a conditional use permit for the entire proposed mine development site. Once the conditional use permit is approved for the entire mine site, the operator of the mine shall obtain zoning approval for an operating permit. The operating permit shall include a mining site plan, operating plan that addresses potential negative impacts on surrounding land uses, water use plan, and reclamation plan.

#### Objective 4.2U Lake, Stream and River Water Quality

The water quality of lakes, streams, and rivers shall be protected to prevent degradation below the appropriate water quality standards established by federal or state agencies.

#### Policy 4.2.1U Withlacoochee River

As an Outstanding Florida Water, the Withlacoochee River shall be protected according to the following requirements:

- a. Development within the riverine floodplain shall be regulated by to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts to the existing water quality of the river as follows:
  - 1. Residential development shall be permitted at a density of one (1) unit per 10 acres and allowed to cluster in accordance with the provisions of the Future Land Use Element;
  - 2. All clustered development shall occur outside of the 100-year riverine floodplain. Development utilizing 10 acre tracts may develop within the 100-year riverine floodplain subject to no net loss of floodplain storage area and all provisions for flood-proofing utility systems must be carried out by the landowner; and
- b. Existing lots of record that are vested pursuant to the Future Land Use Element that do not meet the density requirements of section a. above shall be exempt from this density restriction.

#### Policy 4.2.2U Lake Panasoffkee

As an Outstanding Florida Water, Lake Panasoffkee shall be protected according to the following requirements:

- a. The County shall continue to support the efforts of SWFWMD and FDEP, as well as any other state or federal agency, in the maintenance of the lake to improve water quality and fisheries populations:
- b. The County shall maintain public boat access to the lake;

c. The County shall investigate methods to identify and restrict inappropriate development to enhance the natural systems and recreational opportunities on the southwest side of the lake;

#### Policy 4.2.3U Other Lakes

Areas within 200 feet of Lakes Miona, Deaton, or Okahumpka shall be protected according to the following requirement:

- a. The County shall encourage development to cluster development away from the wetlands and water bodies using PUD process;
- b. Development intensity may be transferred from wetland areas and adjacent 100-year floodplain areas to upland areas; and
- c. The County shall require stormwater systems demonstrate consistency with SWFWMD standards prior to development activity.

#### **Objective 4.3U Monarch Industrial Park Wetlands**

Assure the appropriate protection of wetlands and perpetual preservation of the Monarch Protection Area within the Monarch Industrial Park.

#### Policy 4.3.1U Monarch Industrial Park Wetlands and Monarch Protection Area

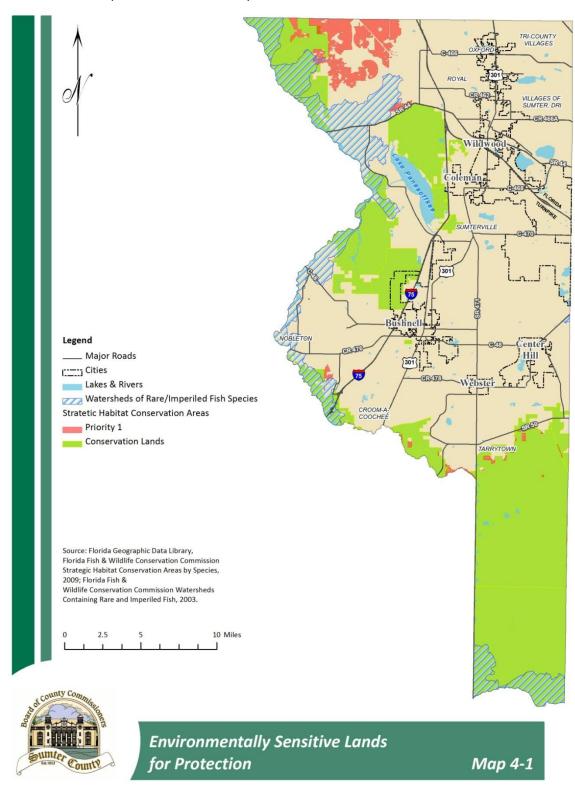
Consistent with the Stipulated Settlement Agreement between the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (fka Department of Community Affairs), Sumter County, and property owner, George Sola et al., (DOAH Case #10-10931GM) specific regulations and limitations for wetlands and an area identified as the Monarch Protection Area are adopted within Policy 1.1.5U of the Future Land Use Element.

#### City of Center Hill Area Specific Goals, Objectives and Policies

Not included in unincorporated county version

#### City of Webster Area Specific Goals, Objectives and Policies

Not included in unincorporated county version



Map 4-1 – Environmentally Sensitive Lands for Protection